



An important portion of Nancy Donahue's bio was inadvertently omitted. Please see below.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TO: Editors, Feature Writers, and
Event Listings

SUBJECT: Special Exhibition &
Awards Banquet Gala

DATE: May 31, 2022

CONTACT: Sara Bogosian, Pres.-Exec. Dir.
Whistler House Museum of Art

978-807-6679 Cell

sbogosian@whistlerhouse.org

Whistler House Museum of Art to Honor Nancy L. Donahue with The James McNeill Whistler Distinguished Art Award on her 92nd Birthday

LOWELL, MA. - This June, the Whistler House Museum of Art will honor art enthusiast, humanitarian, and philanthropist Nancy Lawson Donahue with the *James McNeill Whistler Distinguished Art Award*. In esteemed recognition, the Lowell Art Association, Inc. will premiere a special exhibition in her honor. The event and exhibition, *Lowell: My Hometown*, will present paintings, photographs, and sculptures by artists members of the Lowell Art Association and will take place at the **UMass Lowell Inn and Conference Center on Friday, June 24th, the date of Donahue's 92nd birthday. The gala event begins at 4:00 p.m. with the exhibition and a celebratory award banquet, including dinner and dance starting at 6:00 p.m.**

The award recognizes the contributions, achievements, and talents of an individual or organization that has consistently demonstrated the highest level of excellence in his or her work; promoting, enhancing, and educating, while advancing the world of art for the citizens of today and tomorrow. "Nancy Donahue is a most deserving recipient of this award. Her talent in recognizing the importance of the arts in our society is undeniable and her ability to promote art and culture is quite extraordinary," said Sara Bogosian, President and Executive Director of the Whistler House Museum of Art.

Born in New Britain, Connecticut, in 1930, she grew up at the end of the Great Depression and into World War II. Her father was an engineer, who ended up having to make a living selling ten-cent insurance policies door to door. Through the church, Red Cross, and many other civic and charitable organizations, her mother volunteered to help families who needed support, while raising Nancy and her two brothers and sister.

At an early age, Nancy was already volunteering in the community. World War II had started when she entered junior high, and she joined the Victory Farmerettes. All the boys—including her uncles—had been drafted, and the farmers were left with no one to do the labor. So, the young girls spent their days training to cultivate the soil and harvest crops on farms around New Britain. Everyone took part in the war effort. Each family had its own Victory Garden. In high school, she was a Candy Striper at her local hospital and was involved in many churches and a large number of school organizations.

After she graduated from Lasell College, in 1950, she landed a job in Boston at IBM, as one of only five female salespeople across the nation. The company was refining its innovations on the electric typewriter, and management thought women would be better at persuading

schools and colleges to buy their product, as typing was considered “a woman’s job.”

She met her late husband and the love of her life, Richard King Donahue, while she was working in Boston. He was attending Boston University Law School. They were married in 1952 and went on to have 11 children.

Nancy became an integral part of the revitalization of Lowell, playing a central role in serving on the Boards of the New England Quilt Museum, the Canal Water Cleaners, Project Learn, The Cultural Office of Lowell, The Women Working Wonders Fund, the Revolving Museum, and the former American Textile and History Museum.

She and her late husband Dick both served as chairs of the Whistler House Museum of Art and she is presently the Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees and the founder and chair of the Board of the Merrimack Repertory Theater. She is also a Trustee of the Ayer Home Foundation, which supports the arts education, children, and women. She serves on the Advisory Boards of Lasell University, UMass Lowell, Project Learn, the Angkor Dance Company, UTEC, Adolescent Consultation Service, Massachusetts Down Syndrome, Special Olympics, and Enterprise Bank. She served as a supporter of the Lowell Folk Festival as well.

There is no organization or cause in Lowell and beyond that Nancy has not had a hand in some way, shape, or form. Nancy is a public-spirited pioneer, world-changer, extraordinary philanthropist, and a Mother, Grandmother, Great Grandmother, Sister, Aunt, and Friend.

To her, giving is more than a milestone in one’s life, it is a lifestyle. “Giving is the fabric of being. Giving more is the thread to an unforgettable legacy.” — Nancy L. Donahue.

James McNeill Whistler, for whom the award is named, was one of America’s premier nineteenth-century artists. He created and developed new techniques in painting and printmaking, which had a major impact on the art world. The recipient of the *James McNeill Whistler Distinguished Art Award* follows in the footsteps of this inspiring artist. As Joseph Pennell, biographer of Whistler, wrote in *Life of Whistler*, “His name and his fame will live forever.”

“Like Whistler, Nancy Donahue, the 2022 *James McNeill Whistler Distinguished Art Award* recipient, will also be remembered for her extraordinary contributions to the community and the international world of art,” said Sara Bogosian, “Nancy Donahue is a strong advocate for arts and cultural institutions and an overwhelming supporter of all societal organizations, as reflected in her one-of-a-kind leadership, lauded all over the world. The Whistler House Museum of Art is proud to present the 2022 James McNeill Whistler Distinguished Art Award to Nancy L. Donahue’s efforts to promote the humanities, and specifically arts and culture and the promotion of the Whistler House Museum of Art.”

The Whistler House Museum of Art, located in Lowell, Massachusetts, is the historic birthplace of the famous American artist, James McNeill Whistler. Established in 1878 as the Lowell Art Association Inc., it is the oldest incorporated art association in the United States. It is known internationally for its distinguished collection of 19th and early 20th-century New England representational art. The Whistler House hosts many exhibits, lectures, educational programs, concerts, and an array of social events.

EXHIBITION & AWARDS BANQUET

Friday, June 24th	4:00 PM	Exhibition Opens
	5:00 PM	Cocktail Hour
	6:00 PM	Dinner and Program
	7:00 PM	Dancing

UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center

Lowell, Massachusetts

Admission: \$175.00 per person

For reservations/more information contact:

Whistler House Museum of Art
243 Worthen Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852
Phone: 978-807-6679
Email: sbogasian@whistlerhouse.org

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Whistler House Museum of Art
243 Worthen Street
Lowell, MA 01852
(978) 452-7641
www.whistlerhouse.org

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